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THE ARYAN WORDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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III.

HAVING now dealt with those Persian words in the Hebrew-Aramaic text which have as their first element the prefixes *pari* (*pairi*), *pati* (*paiti*), and *ti* (for *ati*), we next turn to the vocables in which we find the preposition *ni* (*ēvi*, *in*, Russian *na*). Of these there are four, to wit:—

נִשְׁתָּן - נִבְרַשְׁתָּא - נִדְנָה - נִבְזָבָה

1. The word *Nishtewān* (נִשְׁתָּן) occurs in Ezra (4, 7, 18, 23; 5, 5; 7, 11), in both Hebrew and Aramaic passages. The R. V. renders it by 'answer' in Ezra 5, 5, in both text and margin; but this meaning it can hardly bear. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon renders it 'letter,' giving it (with notice of Meyer's doubt on the subject) as a Persian word, probably derived from the root from which in Modern Persian comes *nāvishtah* (older *nibishtah*), 'something written.'

This derivation, however, is impossible. For the latter word, in the neuter, actually occurs in the Achaemenian Inscriptions as *nīpishtam*, 'written.' It comes from *ni* and the root *pish*, 'to rub,' which is found also in Avestic with the same sense. In Sanskrit this root occurs with the meaning, 'to grind, strike.' It is preserved in Russian too, in which language the past participle *na-pis-ano* means

'written' (neut.). Hence the Persian word, if taken into Hebrew or Aramaic, must have retained the *p*, as it does everywhere else. As this *p* does not occur here, it is clear that the suggested etymology is wrong.

The root of the word is really *stā*, 'to stand' (Achæmænian, Avestic, etc.; in Sanskrit *sthā*), which, with the prefix *ni*, becomes *ni-shtā* in Achæm., *ni-šta* in Av., and *ni-shṭhā* in Sansk. Its causative stem *nishtāya* occurs in the Achæm. Inscriptions, meaning 'to cause to stand in,' and then 'to enjoin, appoint, command.' The simple form *ni-stā* occurs at least thrice in the Avestā (Yasht X, 109, 111), meaning 'to be infixed.' The causative verb in Sanskrit means 'to fix in, to give forth,' etc., the past participle, *nishṭhita*, of the simple verb means 'fixed,' 'firm.' The verbal adjective *nishṭhā-vat* (nom. *nishṭhāvān*) means 'perfect,' 'complete.' This adjective in Avestic would be *ništāvānt*: in the nom. sing. masc. *ništāvān* (in one form).

The Hebrew-Aramaic vocable would then mean something *fixed* or *enjoined*, or '*finished*'; it might signify 'statement,' 'report,' 'memorial,' 'document,' but could not mean 'a letter.' The word for 'a letter' in Ezra 5, 6 is אֶגֶרֶת which is from the Assyrian *ēgirtu*, with the same meaning. The LXX render נִשְׁתָּן by φορολόγος, "tax-collector."

2. *Nebrashṭā* (נְבִרְשָׁתָא) occurs in Dan. 5, 5, where it is rendered 'the candlestick.' (It has been taken into New Hebrew in the form נְבִרְשֶׁת). The B. D. B. Lexicon says it is "probably a foreign word," but gives no suggestions as to its etymology.

On this point, however, there is no room for doubt. The first element is *ni*, and the root is the Avestic *barej* (Sanskrit *bhrāj*, 'to shine, beam, sparkle, glitter'). In

Avestic from the root comes *berejya*, 'brass': in Sanskrit we have the noun *bhrāj*, 'light, lustre, splendor.' The compound *anu-bhrāj* in Skt. means 'to light up, to illuminate.' Another Avestic form of the same root is *barāz*, whence comes *barāza*, 'brilliant, brilliancy.' As both *j* and *z* in Avestic become *š* (= *sh*) before *t*, the past participle would be *barešta* or *barāšta*, to which, if we prefix *ni*, we get *nibarešta* or *nibarāšta*. The final vowel in the actually occurring Aramaic form *nebrashtā* is doubtless the emphatic termination. The word would mean 'illuminated,' and might thus easily mean 'lamp,' 'chandelier.' It is interesting to notice that the root *barej* is the Greek *φλέγ-ω*, Lat. *flag-* (*flag-ro*, *flag-ma* = *flamma*), and the English *bright*. The Peshittā renders the word by *sherāgā*, which is the Persian *chirāgh*, 'lamp.'

3. *Nidneh* (נִדְנָה) is a word which assumes various forms at the hands of editors in Dan. 7, 15 (Aramaic). Baer has there נִדְנָה, Kautzsch has נִדְנָה, Nöldeke and Bevan נִדְנָה, incorporating the fem. pronominal suffix. The word is used as נִדְנָה (and also as לִדְנָה) in the Talmud and Targums. It occurs as נִדְן or נִדֵּן in the Hebrew of 1 Chron. 21, 27, where its meaning is clearly shown to be the *sheath* of a sword. (It is evidently not the similar word which occurs in Ezek 16, 33 and which is from the Assyrian *nadnu*, *nidnu*, *nindanu*, *nudnu*, *nudunnu*, *nudinnu*, 'a gift, a dowry.') The word which we are now considering does not actually occur in either Avestic or Achæmenian texts, but of its derivation no doubt is possible. The root in Avestic is *dā*, 'to give, to put' [*δίδωμι*, *τίθημι*, *dare*], Skt. *dhā*. In both languages it is compounded with *ni*: hence we get Avest. *ni-dā*, 'to give up, hand over,' Skt. *nidhā*, 'to deposit, put into, fix in.' Hence in

Avestic we have *nidhāiti*, *nidhāta*, 'a putting off: put down, connected: nature, abundance, stored up'; and in Skt. *nidhāna*, 'receptacle.' This in the form *nidāna* or *nidhāna* must have occurred in Avestic, and probably in Achæmenian too, and is the word we want. It occurs in Pāli also (*nidhāna*, 'receptacle, treasury, store'), and in Modern Persian as an adjective assumes the form *nihān*, 'hidden,' 'secret.' The word for *sheath* (of a sword) in Skt. is *pi-dhāna*, from the same root *dhā*, with another prefix *pi* for *api* (Gk. *ἐπι*).

4. *N^ebizbāh* (נִבְּזָבָה) occurs in the Aramaic of Dan. 2, 6; 5, 14. As the Masoretic text is so generally right in the *consonants* of the foreign words used in it, we are reluctant to make any change in this word; and yet without a slight alteration of a single letter it seems impossible to make it mean anything. But if the second *bēth* be considered to be an error for *nūn*, all is clear. The meaning "reward," given in both R. V. and A. V., suits the context, and can be got only by accepting the etymology which we are about to give. Ibn Ezra says that the word means *δῶρον*, and Rashi's explanation, *dōr^enōt* (= *δῶρα*) comes to the same thing. I believe that the word should be written *nibāz^enāh* (נִבְּזָנָה). We recognize *ni* as the first element, and the root *baž* occurs in Avestic with the meaning 'to divide, to bestow.' Another form of the Avestic root is *baj*, 'to break, divide, distribute,' whence comes *bāga*, 'wealth.' [In Achæmenian Persian *baga* means 'a god' as *distributing* good and evil: the Russian *Bog* (pronounced *Bokh*) is also 'God.'] In Sanskrit the root is *bhaj* and *bhanj*. It is found also in Armenian, in which tongue we have *baž*, 'an impost, tax'; *bāžel*, 'to tax'; *bāžin*, 'part, share'; *bāžānel*, 'to divide, to share.' We thus get *ni* + *bāz*.

To this is added the Avestic noun-ending *-ana* or *anā*; which gives us the word *nibāzanā*, 'a gift,' which in Aramaic would be written נִבְזָנָה.

There is only one other possible derivation, it seems to us. This is to take the root *vaz* instead of *baš* or *baj*. In Avestic the root *vaz* (=Skt. *vah*, Lat. *veh-ere*), 'to carry,' occurs in composition with *ni*, and *ni-vaz* means 'to bring down, carry down,' also 'to bring to, lead to, caress'; in Skt. *ni-vah* is 'to lead to, carry, support.' In Modern Persian the root *nivāz* means 'to caress, fondle.' Hence, if we take the *bēth* as *v*, we have *nivāz^enāh* (נִבְזָנָה) for an Avestic *nivāzanā* 'favor,' and thus possibly 'reward.' But of these two suggested derivations we prefer the former to the latter. Either is better than Saadiah's proposal to derive the word from מַצָּה, 'to plunder'!

Having now done with the words beginning with the prefix *ni*, we turn to those formed from a root or a noun with the prefix *apa* (Avestic, Achæmenian, and Sanskrit; Gk. ἀπό, Lat. *ab*), 'from,' 'away from.' There seem to be only two of these in the Bible: מִצֶּדֶק and מִצְדִּיק. We take the latter first, because it has hitherto puzzled translators, including the LXX and the Peshittā.

1. *Appētōm* (מִצְדִּיק), as the Masoretes and editors (in the MSS. it seems to be written *appētōs*) punctuate the word, occurs only in Ezra 4, 13 (Aram.). The B. D. B. Heb. Lexicon gives Haug's explanation, by which it would come from a Pahlavi word and would mean "in the end" (R. V.), and also Scheftelowitz's, who derives it from *pathmā*, pl. of the Avestic *pathma*, which is variously rendered, 'a road, path; stores, provisions.' He would translate 'treasuries.' Neither explanation seems satisfactory, especially

the latter. The true form of the word is doubtless *apa-tauma*, which in Achæmenian would mean 'progeny.' *Taumā* is the Achæmenian form of the Avestic *taokhma*, 'family,' 'seed,' in Modern Persian *tukhm*. In the Achæmenian Inscriptions, from *nyāka*, 'a grandfather,' is similarly formed *apa-nyāka*, 'ancestor.' This rendering suits the context also, for the clause then runs "And the progeny of the kings will it endamage." If we substitute ' for ʾ, the word might be the equivalent of the Skt. *apatyam*, 'offspring." But this is unnecessary, and very unlikely to be correct.

2. *Appeden* (אֲפֶדֶן) occurs only in the Hebrew of Dan. 11, 45. It is generally and correctly taken to be the Achæmenian *apadāna*, and rendered 'Palace.' It comes from *apa* and the root *dā* (Skt. *dhā*), 'to place.' In Sanskrit also we have *apa-dhā*, 'to set apart.' *Apadāna* would therefore mean a building 'set apart' for the king. It is noteworthy that it occurs in Armenian, with only the *d* changed into *r*, being used only in the plural (which in that tongue adds *k'h*) *aparank'h*, with the meaning 'a palace.'

There appears to be only one word with the prefix *vī* (which in Avestic takes the place of the Sanskrit *vi*; in Modern Persian it becomes *bi* and *bī*; also in verbs *gu*), 'apart.' Even regarding this vocable there is some doubt whether it is Āryan or purely Semitic. It is the noun *bītān* (בֵּיתָן) in the Hebrew of Esther 1, 5; 7, 7. 8. It is each time associated with a *garden*, and is translated 'palace' by the R. V. Dieulafoy holds that *bītān* ("throne-room") is identical in meaning with *apadāna*, but this is exceedingly doubtful, though no doubt possible.

The word *may* mean 'palace': but, if so, it is the Assyrian *bītānu* or *bītannu*, which has this sense, being

possibly formed like *bītāni* one of the plurals of *bītu*, 'house' (cf. *īlu*, pl. *īlāni*, etc.). Some, however, read the Assyrian word differently. If they are right, and if *bītānu* does not actually occur in Assyrian, then we must look elsewhere for our word. On the other hand, if *bītānu* is correctly read in Assyrian, it may be a Persian word taken into the language, as is the case with a number of other words from the same source.

But perhaps it may be preferable to consider *bītān* as a Persian rather than a true Semitic word. In Sanskrit and Pāli *vitāna* occurs, and signifies 'an awning, canopy, cover,' being derived from the root *tan* (cf. Lat. *ten-do*, *ten-eo*, etc.), 'to stretch,'—with *vi*, 'to stretch out.' In Avestic we do not actually find the word, but it would be *vitāna*. The root *tan*, with the above meaning, and the prefix *vi*, are both used in Avestic; hence there can hardly be a doubt that *vitāna* meant 'a canopy,' or perhaps a 'marquee' in the royal garden, something of the nature of the present *shāmiyāna*, though much more magnificent. It was made of 'white stuff, cotton (linen) and violet' hangings, with marble pillars to support it, and a mosaic-work pavement, of which Dieulafoy has discovered the remains. The word *bītān* is copied into the Peshittā in both passages where it occurs in Esther, but it does not seem to occur in later Aramaic ("Chaldee"). It seems therefore to have failed to take root in the language, though used in Esther because describing a Persian thing, for which the use of a Persian word was natural and appropriate.